

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 02562 031823Z

14
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 031745Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8622
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 2562

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT EI
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON IRISH CABINET CHANGES

REF: DUBLIN 2554

1. THE IRISH CABINET CHANGES (REFTEL) REPRESENT VERY LITTLE CHANGE IN IRISH AFFAIRS. IT IS CLEARLY A DEMOTION FOR DEFENSE MINISTER DONEGAN AFTER HIS "THUNDERING DISGRACE" IMBROGLIO A FEW WEEKS AGO (DUBLIN 2264 AND PREVIOUS). SOME ARE INTERPRETING IT AS A "NICE" GESTURE BY COSGRAVE TOWARD THE NEW PRESIDENT, PADDY HILLERY, WHO WAS SWORN IN THE DAY AFTER THE RESHUFFLE. THUS THE PERSON WHO INSULTED THE PRESIDENCY WAS REPRIMANDED. ACCORDING TO OUR
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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 02562 031823Z

BEST INFORMATION COSGRAVE HAS ONLY TAKEN THE DEFENSE

PORTFOLIO TEMPORARILY, AND WILL NAME A NEW DEFENSE MINISTER NEXT WEEK, POSSIBLY SLIGHTLY RESHUFFLING THE CABINET AGAIN. EITHER ONE OF TWO PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES, JOHN KELLY OR OLIVER FLANAGAN, IS EXPECTED TO MOVE UP TO A CABINET POSITION AT THAT TIME. THE BETTING FAVORS FLANAGAN. AS USUAL COSGRAVE IS KEEPING QUIET ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS.

2. BOTH FITZPATRICK AND BARRY HAVE BEEN RATHER LACKLUSTER MINISTERS, AND, INDEED, IN A "POPULARITY" POLL LAST YEAR THEY CAME IN NEXT-TO-LAST AND LAST RESPECTIVELY. BOTH ARE NOTED FOR THEIR UNQUESTIONING LOYALTY TO COSGRAVE, AND THIS IS AS GOOD A REASON AS ANY TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR PROMOTIONS. NEITHER IS EXPECTED TO MAKE WAVES. BARRY'S ELEVATION CAN ALSO BE INTERPRETED AS AN ATTEMPT TO ASSIST FINE GAEL'S FORTUNES IN CORK, HIS CONSTITUENCY. ON THE WHOLE THIS SLIGHT RESHUFFLE IS ABOUT AS NEGATIVE AND INSIGNIFICANT AN EVENT AS COULD BE MANAGED GIVEN THE NECESSITY OF FILLING BURKE'S EDUCATION POSITION. CURLEY

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